2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

Marriages between

621 members of rival partiti are regarded as undesirable. They occa-
[582] sionally take place, but the division of loyalty within the nuclear
[586] family which results often leads to quarrels and, occasionally, to
temporary separations. (The favourite festa-time story of the wife
● [593] who refuses to cook for her husband because he belongs to the
[538] other partit is based on fact!) Of the marriages contracted within
Farrug, 72 per cent took place between members of the same partit.
Children of mixed marriages support the feast of their favourite
parent: boys normally follow their fathers and girls their mothers.

578- I recorded only two cases in Farrug of adults who changed
621 their partit affiliation. Both occurred over fifty years ago. A lead-
ing member of the St. Roque partit left it after a heated quarrel
with Dun Rokku over the design for new street decorations. He
subsequently became one of the other partit's most honoured
members, and even wrote a book on the life of St. Martin. The
second man left St. Roque when he married the daughter of the
president of the St. Martin club. I was told that the girl's father
had insisted on the change before he gave his consent to the
marriage. The young man went on to become president of the
club, as did his only son. In another village a few young men left
their partit after a quarrel with one of the leaders, but all returned
after a year.

621 Although an outsider who marries into a village generally sup-
ports the partit of his spouse, a few of them, particularly the men,
succeed in remaining neutral. Of the 122 outsiders who married
into Farrug,[1] 28 per cent of the men but only 8 per cent of the
women remained uncommitted. A few even chose to support
partiti opposed to those of their spouses. Thus a women from
Qrendi who married a St. Martin supporter and moved to Farrug
became a follower of St. Roque because she had been a keen
member of the secondary partit in her native village. Children of
families in which one of the parents is an outsider, especially if the
parent remains neutral, often support the partit of their friends
rather than those of their parents or siblings. A case in point is
that of the president of the St. Roque club, and his brother. Their
father was an outsider who, because of his position as headmaster,
made a point of remaining strictly neutral. Though his wife was
from a St. Martin family, one son supported St. Martin, the other
St. Roque.

[162] [1] 61 men and 61 women. These marriages represent 54 per cent of the total in the village.

472 to be suffering from a mixture of inertia and pure inability
511 to organize the accounts of his business. In some cases he
[65] is compelled to put forward an outline statement for income
[157] tax assessment but generally his illiteracy and suspicion makes him unwilling to trust other individuals with details of his income and expenditure.

511 Within the family, however, this suspicion does not
454 normally exist. In fact the housewife tends to have full
[593] call on the contents of the "one purse" although in only a few cases was it found that she was making any detailed attempt at budgeting for the expenses of her home and family. As with the operation of the farm so with the home, the money is dispensed as demanded but all the time the instinct to save, observed by the 1911 Royal Commissioners (B/186), is there. The traditional peasant idea is
[178] that a large hoard of money or valuables will serve as an insurance when the expected depression arrives. Despite the opinion of the 1911 Commissioners, the notion that the saved capital would be better invested, possibly in capital equipment, is only now spreading to a considerable part of the farming community of the Islands.

511 In the day-to-day expenses of the traditional Maltese
437 village household, barter played a considerable part.
178 Today instances of it are rare and money is the fully accepted medium of exchange. As already indicated the Maltese farmer is not so far removed from his peasant past as may at first sight appear to be the case and one of the basic aims of his farming is still the provision of food
[433] for his family. The average farm in Malta, whatever its basis (stock, dairying or field produce), usually strives
[294] to produce as much of the food needs of the family as possible, though the provision of the family's clothing, as in the past when home-grown cotton was spun and woven to make clothes for the members of the grower's family, is no longer attempted.

262 Thus the food bought in by the farmer's wife includes
438 the 'new' items of diet which cannot be grown on the home farm: preserves, processed cheeses, spaghetti and farinaceous pasta, processed meats, tea, coffee, and evaporated milk (inordinately popular throughout the Islands).
[656] Flour rationing since the early part of the 1939-45 War has killed bread making as a home industry. Meat, except for rabbit, fowl and small birds, has to be purchased, as all
[433] slaughtering is Government-controlled. The farmer does aim to produce the basic vegetables - potatoes, beans, peas, pumpkins, melons, tomatoes, onions, garlic, artichokes, endives, celery, cucumber, carrots, and fruits - oranges, apples, lemons, figs, peaches, etc., required by the family.

457 511 lack of distinction between the money spent on the farm and that spent on the household.

In Case X there is an exceptional degree of trust and [593] co-operation between husband and wife. Unlike the average Maltese farmer, the husband in this Case (literate and English-speaking) keeps some check on income and expenditure in the form of receipts and documents relating to the Pitkal and other transactions. He observes that his keeping such vouchers was regarded as "a waste of time" by his contemporaries until an instance arose where they proved of major importance and benefit.

[454] At the end of 1957 he talked vaguely of a bank balance of £1,000. By April of the following year this had fallen to "£600" on account of certain heavy expenses (v. Case X). The period in question was financially atypical for this man because he was at the time rapidly expanding his herd of pigs, and he also suffered very badly from the severe storms of October, 1957.

The preparation of any kind of account for him or for any farmer like him is further complicated by the uncommercial approach which is made to the labour of the farmer himself(and in this Case that of a brother and nephew who normally work with him). Tasks are performed because custom demands that they are done and a job is not neglected because the return on it is insufficient. Thus [511] the labour of the farmer and his relatives does not figure as a cost in production (Section 2).

His income derives largely from the sale of fruit 434 (figs, apples, plums, pomegranates, etc.) but is variable. 454 In 1953 the two brothers shared £620 but in the 1956-57 458 season a larger amount of actual produce fetched only £340 to be shared between the two men. The nephew "receives something when a crop is sold". Other items sold in 1956-57 were grapes (£32) and smaller sales of tomatoes, sulla and potatoes. Thus in the 1956-57 season each of the brothers received a gross profit of about £250 on produce sold. This takes no account of food consumed directly by the family (for details v. Case X) nor of the virtual income in a poor year such as 1956-57 from savings. This feature is crucial. Given the normal conditions of peace, with no distortions as a result of war and siege, it becomes clear that the Maltese farmer is, in the great majority of cases, attempting to gain on the swings of the good year the saveable profit which he expects to lose on the roundabouts of a bad year not far hence. This insecurity of his capital is important in [181] his reluctance to lay out money on new methods of production or farm management and in part also echoes the conservation and inertia of the traditional peasant.

leisure time in place of unpaid field work with his parents.

Pawlu admits nevertheless that much of the inferior condition of the farmer derives from his inability to unite with other farmers (Section 4). Illiteracy, ignorance and suspicion are the major causes of his fear. Only a few farmers are members of either of the two opposing Unions of Farmers while the situation regarding co-operatives is equally unpromising. Pawlu himself became one of the organizers of a special 'Tractor Co-Operative', initiated by C.A.R.E. at the end of 1958 (Section 2) for a group of farmers in his home village. The members paid £2 each on joining the co-operative and were thereafter able to hire one of the two tractors donated by C.A.R.E. at only 10/- per hour instead of the commercial 17s. The fact that Pawlu himself was among the organizers of such a novel venture reflects his progressive outlook, and his standing in the village.

*159 156 829 Politics interest Pawlu, to a more than average degree His concern is based on an informed intelligence. A supporter of the Labour Party, he considers the Nationalists as holding the masses in contempt and he points to their emphasis on the Italian language and the non-Maltese culture which it represented as evidence. He reads the local Maltese-language press but is sufficiently independent of mind to have cancelled his subscription to the 'Lohen is-Sewwa' (B/65) at the time of the 'Integration' referendum on the grounds that neither the Church nor the Paper would publish an 'official' statement on the attitude of the Church. Yet his religious devotion is without question and he has a respected place in Church and village life.

*159 156 829 593 [555] [167] The Family. Pawlu lives with his wife and six of his children. His eldest son and daughter are both working as teachers in Malta. Another daughter has emigrated.

Pawlu's wife speaks only Maltese and had as little formal education as her husband, but she has at all times nothing but encouragement for her family in their education In this case there is not the usual gulf in outlook between parents and children on account of the education of the latter - for the parents fully realize the need. Pawlu's wife used to work in the fields when young but now spends [462] her time in the house. Certain jobs remain her special concern however, notably cheese-making, care of lambs and chicks and egg-collection.

*159 156 108 593 [895] The eldest son, now working as a teacher, is one of the young 'intellectuals' who are currently making an appearance in Gozo. The ties of family and respect between him and his father are strong but he is out of touch with the

*159 156 178 ●593 farm and ignorant of many details of its history and operation. He is "never likely to soil his hands with farming". He is moving away from farming and from the cultural and social life of his village. He apologises for the efforts of the villagers when they attempt to produce a play, he dismisses nick-names as "old-fashioned", and he decries the limitations on activity in his native Island (no dancing or bright lights). Yet he is still enough attached to Gozo to want to introduce changes to it and to make it more like the place his education has made him want to live in. He is typical of one important and growing element in the younger generation of rural Malta and Gozo. In his teens he used to help his father in the fields and took milk to the collection depot, but this stopped as soon as he found a full-time alternative occupation.

*159 156 593 46 87 Pawlu's eldest daughter, also a teacher, has left farm-work far behind. For her this was never more than casual assistance with vegetable picking and lifting during holidays from school. It is not likely that she will be a farmer's wife.

Pawlu's second daughter left school at twelve and divided her time between house and field work until her marriage in her late teens. She was acknowledged as her father's main assistant with the animals.

Two daughters in their middle teens are academically inclined to the extent of staying at school as long as possible and speaking four languages. Both still do incidental farm work when not occupied with studies. Both would be probable 'sixth-form' and university candidates were there any liklihood of financial backing. Their education, especially in English language and culture, is giving them - and many others like them - an advancement which is not matched by opportunity. They are learning in an educational cul-de-sac.

A son in his middle teens works full-time in the fields with his father, having left school at twelve, while two more boys are still of compulsory school age and give their father only casual assistance with feeding the smaller animals out of school hours. A little girl of some ten years makes no economic contribution to the farm.

*159 46 The major feature to emerge from the above consideration is that the bulk of the work of the farm, and the full-time responsibility for all jobs, rests with Pawlu alone. The son who is old enough to deputise for his father has left farming: the only full-time help comes from a younger boy who may himself decide to follow his brother in a few years. Now Pawlu complains that "Labour is the main trouble if the farmer cannot cope with all the

159 245 in a single picking and do not require the same attention to quality as those for the table.

159 245 231 451 In this move towards more vine production and the recent interest in pigs Ġamri is making a conscious effort to emphasize the profitable in place of the unprofitable. Income for Ġamri means the receipts on produce sold. Unlike most farmers he keeps a record of this income in order to see "how business is progressing" and in order to enable him and his brother to effect a share-out of profits. As found generally Ġamri takes no account of his own labour, or that of his brother or nephews, in his costing. Moreover the position is complicated by the fact that no clear distinction is made between money spent on the home and family, and money spent on field rents, costs of seed, manure, etc. It is all held [593] "in one purse". Ġmri himself maintains that a more usual practice is for the farmer to give his wife a fixed amount for house-keeping but, in his own case, there is clearly a high degree of trust and co-operation between husband and wife.

159 434 454 [511] At Easter, 1958, Ġamri spoke of a balance of some £400, less than half his reserves of a year previously. The drop was due to a £200 outlay on pigs and pig-sties together with several smaller items (such as £50 for street surfacing, £30 for a sewing machine, £15 hospital expenses, £30 for annual field rents, etc.) and the cost of repairing the damage wrought by the exceptionally heavy storms of late 1957. During the year 1956-57 it is estimated that Ġamri's income was about £350. £250 of this came from the sale of field produce as shown below, the rest is an estimate of income from pig sales and other items.

159 434

Income:	From partnership land.	From Ġamri's Land	TOTAL
Fruit.....	£340	-	£340
Grapes.....	49	£ 8	57
Sulla.....	13	15	28
Potatoes.....	12	-	12
Melons.....	11	-	11
Tomatoes.....	7	13	20
Totals.....	£432	£36	£468
Ġamri's share	£216	£36	£252

159 434 434 435 This income pattern is by no means standard from year to year. The 1956-57 season was a poor year, with potato prices to the farmer low, sulla yields below average and a glut of fruit. 1953, on the other hand, was the best of recent years and brought each of the two brothers an income of £310 on fruit alone. The 1956-57 season with its glut in fruit found a quantity greater than in 1953 bringing less return than in that year on the market. This uncertainty as to income between one year and the next is today more important to the arable farmer than to the herdsmen who can rely on the M.M.U.'s guaranteed price and can therefore estimate his income more [454] accurately. The arable, and, especially, the fruit-farmer

*159 156 461 626 517 493 make money, but he has little sympathy for the older people around him and they in their turn regard him as a social (as well as economic) rebel. He takes little part in the social life of the village. Work is his first concern and he is most annoyed when the priest, with whom he has "not been on speaking terms" since his return from Australia, forbids his working on Sundays. This includes even repair work on the machinery indoors. He knows well enough that were he to plow on Sundays or fests days he would be "publically ostracized and no villager would hire him and his plow". His relaxation is his motor-cycle on which he escapes at high speed from time to time along with others of his generation who "have eyes for the lights of Valletta rather than farming".

*159 156 593 Towards his own parents Ġanni's attitude is typical. He regards his father as belonging to the old generation of illiterate or semi-literate countryfolk, steeped in the conservatism of the past and the traditional. Father and son argue continuously over points of policy - with Ġanni tending to assume that his education and wider experience entitles him to something of a 'casting vote' in such arguments. Nevertheless the family tie is there and is strong enough for Ġanni to have an innate respect for his father despite the gulf in education and ideas. Thus Ġanni supported his father's scheme to plant some cotton even though he himself doubted the profitability of this move (1958).

*159 156 [583] Marriage in Malta, where the "evil dowry" ('data') system is maintained, holds little attraction for Ġanni. He observes that he cannot take a girl out on his motor-cycle without the older people of the village criticising him for not marrying her first. This and the whole social climate of village life in Malta of which it is part clashes with the ways he learned in Australia and with the ideas and beliefs which his education and his knowledge of the world outside the village of his birth have brought him.

Ġanni is primarily important to the village because he is staying there. He takes little part in village affairs, he does not "bother about festas", and he has few close [178] friends in his age group of farmers. But his ideas and the new methods and implements which he has brought to the village in face of considerable opposition and ridicule are a significant item in the changing scene of Maltese farming.

CASE XV

*159 402 407 OUD Three brothers work together as a team. Their father works the land full-time and the brothers join him when their joint tractor-hire business is not claiming their attention. Their mechanical activities began some twenty-two years ago and now extend over more than a sixth of the area of Malta. They appear to have been among the first in the tractor

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

SAINT MARTIN'S DAY

527 One of the greatest family feast-days, among the Maltese, is that of St. Martin's, which is held on the 2nd and 3rd Sunday of November.

Happiness and true enjoyment reign supreme in every household on this [593] special day. Pater and materfamilias entertain at dinner their married sons and daughters, with their respective consorts and children, besides nephews, nieces, and others allied by ties of consanguinity.

Every body enjoys his share of sweetmeats on St. Martin's day, with a due allowance of Marsala or some other sort of good Sicilian wine.

527 Children look forward with pleasure
262 to this day, being always regaled, by
859 either their parents or some other member of the family, with a small bag